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DR. JOHN CAIUS, PHYSICIAN AND SCHOLAR

By JAMES J. WALSH, M.D., Ph.D.

After Linacre, in the history of English medicine, comes Dr. John Caius, a very lovable member of the medical profession, whose career, unfortunately for him, ran its course during the disturbed sixteenth century. He deserves to have a place of honor among those who organized the regular medical profession in his day and to a great extent succeeded in restraining quackery which was rife at that period. Fortunately, his name is enshrined in that of the college at Cambridge, named after him because of all that he did for it. Caius is still the favorite college for students who are planning to go on with medical or some form of scientific studies. The alumni of Keys College are very faithful in their allegiance to their alma mater and, as a consequence, it has been the home of a large number of men who have distinguished themselves in the medical profession and in scientific research.

Dr. Keys (more commonly known by the Latin form of his name, Caius) illustrates very well what I said in a previous article with regard to the looseness and, above all, the inconsistency of spelling and pronunciation of English in Elizabeth's time. The name of the family to which he belonged was spelled in no less than ten different ways. That would seem almost impossible, but his biographer, John Venn (*The*

Works of John Caius, Cambridge University Press, 1912), gives the ten spellings: Kees, Keys, Keis, Kesse, Cais, Kaius, Keyse, Cayus, Keyse, and Caius. The one thing that is important about all these variants is that they terminate with the letter *s*. This used to be omitted in sketches of Caius but has been restored, and Keys College is not written Key's, as used to be the case, but Keys.

When it is recalled that the time during which Dr. Keys flourished was the classic or Elizabethan period in English literature, when the deep foundations for the language in its modern form were being laid, this orthographic and etymologic inconsistency becomes all the more striking. Dr. Keys not only had the best education possible, but also lived his life in association with the men and women who were undoubtedly the best speakers and writers of their time. Besides being a distinguished physician, he was also one of the greatest classical scholars of his day.

For many years at the beginning of her reign, Dr. Keys was royal physician to Queen Elizabeth. He was held in almost deep veneration by his medical colleagues, and continues in high esteem among physicians even now, more than four hundred years after his death. His distinction as a physician is evident from the fact that he was elected for nine

successive terms president of the Royal College of Physicians of London. This institution had been founded in the generation before Keys's time by Linacre, after whom our quarterly is named.

Like everyone else anywhere in Europe at that time who wanted to get a better education than could be obtained in his native country, whether in literature or art or science, Dr. Caius, after securing his degree of Master of Arts at Gonville College, Cambridge, made his way down to Italy, where he studied under a group of distinguished men, particularly under Vesalius, who is often spoken of as the father of modern anatomy. Caius learned to think as much of his alma mater in the classical and medical sciences as did Linacre.

Dr. Caius received his degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine at Padua after some four years of study. He then made what might be called a scholastic grand tour of the continent; that is, he visited many of the better-known universities in various parts of Europe in order to be brought intimately in contact with the scholars of his time. He was quite convinced that this intimate contact meant much for broadening the mind and adding to the value of the knowledge he had acquired during his years of study. Many physicians since then, and still more medical students, have gone for a time to Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Italy in order to take this post-graduate course which Dr.

Caius found so valuable.

After some three years of this scholastic touring, he returned to England to take up his life's work. He soon came to be looked upon as one of the great physicians of the time, and was the favorite medical consultant of many prominent personages. He built up a lucrative practice, but so far from hoarding the wealth that came to him he used a good part of it to re-found the college at Cambridge at which he had been a student and did that so judiciously that, ever since, this particular college has been considered the best place in England to make pre-medical studies and prepare for a medical career. In compensation for the benefit thus conferred, the name of Gonville College was changed to that of Keys College, and as all documents relating to education were written in Latin in those days, the college is usually called by the Latin form of his name, Caius College, though students of the college and university men generally use both names, Gonville and Caius College. I have dwelt on this because I am sure when you visit Cambridge, which is very nearly like visiting Harvard in this country, you will be particularly interested in this first of the pre-medical colleges in the history of education.

As I have said, Caius was royal physician, but this position served only to bring him in dangerous opposition to the governmental authorities of his day. The controversy as to whether the King or

Queen of England was the head of the Church as well as the State blazed up in Elizabeth's time, and a number of scholarly men refused to acknowledge the royal supremacy in religious matters. Some of them were put to death, others were thrown into the Tower in the hope of breaking their determination, but in spite of this many of them continued to be faithful adherents of the Pope. Caius was accused of refusing to give fealty to the Queen. When an action was brought against him as a recusant for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen as the head of Church and State, diligent search was made of his lodgings, and it was found that he had concealed there vestments and precious vessels and various other materials connected with the old religion, manifestly hidden away for use and for preservation until the time when the true religion would once more be restored. Although he had many friends among the nobility and Elizabeth herself thought much of him, that did not save him from persecution, and his faithfulness to the Church cost him his lucrative practice as well as his position as royal physician, and he was forced to retire to the country.

In the midst of his very busy practice he made translations of various works of Hippocrates and Galen which gave him a place in medical literature. He also made original contributions to literature for he had acute powers of observation and was able to make

original discoveries of his own. The first independent medical book he wrote contained an account of the sweating sickness. This was a severe disease that swept over England about the middle of the sixteenth century. It is usually considered that it was influenza which has been traced down the centuries in epidemic form, recurring about every twenty years. We know how severe the disease can be for we have had occasion several times in our own generation to realize that. At the end of the Great War, because of the run-down condition of a large part of the population influenza carried off some eight millions of victims, something like twice as many as it had taken four years of modern warfare with all its development of horrible engines of war to destroy. It is easy to understand, then, that the disease deserved the special attention which Caius gave to it and he seems to have been the first who separated it from the other world plagues that decimated humanity in the Middle Ages. Caius's monograph bore the striking title, *A Booke or Counseil against the Disease Commonly Called the Sweat or Sweatyng Sicknesse* (London, 1552), and represented a landmark in the study of epidemic diseases.

It is not surprising, then, to hear that Caius's name is still held in veneration in his own college and throughout the English-speaking world. On the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of

Caius (1910) a memoir of his life was written by John Venn, Sc.D., Senior Fellow and President of the College, at the request of the governing body of the College and of the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of London. It appeared with a collection of Caius's works edited by E. S. Roberts, Master of the College. This is a stately volume, very worthy of its subject, and was at once acquired by all the important medical libraries of the world.

Caius is commended particularly for the fact that he was "hable to gather such a fardell of straunge Antiquities together."

His careful description of separate diseases, that they might be recognized and differentiated, constituted a great advance in the medicine of his day. At that time scarcely any of the so-called ordinary diseases of childhood had been differentiated, and very few contagiously infectious diseases were recognized, so that Caius's work represented very valuable pioneering. It is no wonder, then, that he has been remembered so well and that four hundred years after his death his medical colleagues in Caius College and the Royal College of Physicians should have honored him.

What Every Woman Doesn't Know

Some authorities recommend that cod liver oil be given in the morning and at bedtime when the stomach is empty, while others prefer to give it after meals in order not to retard gastric secretion. If the mother will place the very young baby on her lap and hold the child's mouth open by gently pressing the cheeks together between her thumb and fingers while she administers the oil, all of it will be taken. The infant soon becomes accustomed to taking the oil without having its mouth held open. It is most important that the mother administer the oil in a matter-of-fact

manner, without apology or expression of sympathy.

If given cold, cod liver oil has little taste, for the cold tends to paralyze momentarily the gustatory nerves. As any "taste" is largely a metallic one from the silver or silver-plated spoon (particularly if the plating is worn), a glass spoon has an advantage.

On account of its higher potency in Vitamins A and D, Mead's Cod Liver Oil Fortified With Percomorph Liver Oil may be given in one-third the ordinary cod liver oil dosage, and is particularly desirable in cases of fat intolerance.